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HOME-MADE STAMPED LEATHER.

WHAT is usually called "stamped leather," made and sold by the roll, it would be more proper to term "embossed leather," for the design in relief is obtained by pressure between rollers, one bearing the design in relief and the other its concave counterpart. The manufacturers, however, occasionally produce a little work on the principle of old Venetian stamped leather, the stamping of which was done by hand, with small stamps like book-binders' stamps. This is a sort of work which may easily be done by amateurs, and which may be developed into a home industry of some importance. We therefore give a few hints which may be of service to those who may wish to try it.

Sole leather is the only sort to use. The thin leather used for embossing will not answer for stamping. If only a panel is to be made a single piece may, perhaps, be found large enough to answer; but if a considerable surface is to be covered several pieces will be required. The edges should be neatly cut, so that the several pieces may meet exactly when in place. They can be fastened to the wall with very strong glue and with brass-headed nails. The slight interruption of the design by the latter, and by the joining of the several pieces, does not count if the design is large and bold as it ought to be. The leather may be wrought on plain if its natural color is considered sufficient, but much richer effects can be had by first coating it with silver or tin or aluminium leaf. This purely mechanical work should be done by a competent gilder. The white metal is used both for its own sake and because it is easy to give it the appearance of gold by passing a little gold varnish over it, while gold or Dutch metal cannot be made to look like silver.

The next requisites, after the silvered leather, is a stamping-block of some middling hard wood and a supply of book-binders' stamps. These are small stamps engraved in brass, and having long shanks which are secured in wooden handles. Their variety may be judged of from an examination of bound books in any book-store. Those that are best for the present purpose are the simpler sorts, and should cost not more than twenty-five cents apiece. To secure variety of effect it is necessary that some should be very "open;" that is, should have their design in outline, while others should have considerable surface. It is also necessary to have some varnishes and oil colors, a list of which will be given further on, a few large camel's-hair brushes and small sables and a tracing point of ivory, bone or agate.

The design, having been prepared or copied on thin but tough Whatman's paper, is laid over the silvered leather and traced with a strong pressure by the point so as to leave a good mark on the leather. If thought desirable this can be gone over with a fine sable brush and brown varnish, but it is better to be careful and depend on the indented line left by the tracer.

The tools are now selected—different tools for the background and for the different parts of the design. Some parts, as flowers and foliage that are to appear in their natural colors, are left plain. As a rule, the background tooling should be the heaviest, and should be done with tools having a good deal of surface. The tools should be warmed moderately in the flame of a spirit lamp and should be applied with a quick pressure of the wrist and arm. The work should be carried as nearly as possible up to the outline, never changing the tools in the same part of the design.

The tooling will give the effect of a richly diapered surface, but the pattern will still be rather difficult to make out. The next thing is the treatment of the background. This may be left in silver, may be covered down with two or three coats of gold varnish, may be gold varnished in parts, when these are entirely enclosed and shut off from other parts of the background by the lines of the design. This last plan gives a varied background of silver and gold and is the most effective. Still, good old examples may be found in which the background is treated in opaque oil color, commonly turquoise or other blue, the metallic effects being reserved for parts of the design. Besides the gold varnish there is also a carmine or ruby varnish which may be largely used if a red tone is desired. A varnish which may be made of a little powdered aloes, which can be bought at any drug-store, dissolved in alcohol, gives a warmer gold tone when used thinly than the gold varnish of the color-

dealers, and, when several coatings are given, a rich reddish brown. It serves admirably to tone the carmine varnish, which is of rather too bright a red. Mixed with blue it gives an excellent olive green. These will be all the transparent tints that will be required. The large camel's-hair brushes are used in applying the varnish, which should be made to flow evenly and smoothly.



LOUIS XVI. SCREEN, WITH TAPESTRY PANEL
AFTER BOUCHER.

The background finished, the purely conventional parts of the design are best treated in varnish of a contrasting color; or, if the background is treated in opaque color, these can be left in gold or silver.

The oil colors, used preferably in the naturalistic parts of the design, should be mixed with varnishes of the same color, and be applied with sable brushes. Rather dark olives are most used for leaves, as they contrast well



TAPESTRY DESIGN. FROM A CARTOON BY RAPHAEL.

with the bright metallic ground. White, dark blue, vermilion and turquoise are the other colors most used in good old work. They all go well with gold and the transparent tones. This would be a safe palette for the beginner: Varnishes—gold, carmine toned with aloes, olive made by mixing aloes and deep blue varnish, and aloes used alone; oils—turquoise made by mixing cobalt with emerald green, cobalt darkened with black, white

and vermilion. Extreme richness rather than brilliancy of effect should be aimed at.

The painting completed, the outline should be gone over last of all with a very strong solution of aloes and a fine sable brush. All small details—such as the veining of leaves—can be put in at the same time.

An appearance of age and a certain iridescent quality can be given the silver before working upon it by submitting it to the fumes of sulphuretted hydrogen; but it need not be said that it is an unpleasant operation. Some people find the smell of aloes unbearable, and in that case they may be replaced, but not to advantage in any other respect, by the brown varnish of the color-men. When the work is done, the smell is imperceptible.

The book-binders' tools can be put to other uses besides stamping leather. They may be used on wood when a slight ornamentation in relief is desired; and they may be used on plush with splendid effect. The best way to treat the latter is as follows: Prepare (if it is not to be had, ready prepared, from dealers) some wax medium by dissolving wax in spirits of turpentine to which a small quantity of spike oil may be added. The solution should be rather thicker than megilp, and may be retained of that consistency by mixing with more turpentine as it grows harder. If the color of the plush suits, it is simply to be saturated with this solution, which is allowed to dry between the threads of the pile and so combine them into a mass. But any paint in powder, or gold or silver bronze, can be added to the medium. After the plush is dry, the design can be traced on it by pouncing—that is, rubbing powdered chalk or charcoal through pin-holes made along the lines. The stamping is done just as for stamped leather, but less pressure is needed as the warm tools melt the wax and bear down the fibres easily. The wax, cooling again, prevents their rising once more to their old position. The effect is of a lustrous depressed ornamentation in a dull ground of the same color. Stencils can be used in order to save portions of the stuff of its original color and quality, and one of the most beautiful effects obtainable is got by stencilling white or pale-colored silk plush with wax medium mixed with silver bronze and then stamping the waxed portion only. The wax preserves the bronze from change and also keeps it from getting into the atmosphere of the room. This sort of work can be used for wall-panels, friezes, cabinet-linings and for all similar purposes.

ROBERT JARVIS.

Ceramics.

LESSONS IN CHINA-PAINTING.

VI.—FIGURE SUBJECTS AND PORTRAITS.

FIGURE-PAINTING on china should not be undertaken by way of experiment. Without that ability and training which would make success sure in painting in oils or water-colors happy results cannot reasonably be anticipated; but those who can confidently and conscientiously take up this class of work will find that mineral colors will meet their wants most satisfactorily. Nothing, not even the beautiful ivory miniature, can be made more pleasing than a face well painted on fine porcelain.

One should begin with something easy, the elvish little faces of cupids, it may be. These are not much more difficult than the bodies; they are tinted over the same as the bodies, and a few touches indicate the tiny features.

Use transparent water-color for sketching. Rose madder is the most desirable except for the eyes and hair, which may have delicate local color. The softer and finer the sketch, the better one can judge of the excellence of the work.

A suitable neutral background tint may be made by mixing one third ivory black and two thirds light sky blue. Let this be clouded in so as to relieve the figures with its more shadowy parts, and then, vignette-like, fade away about the margin. The blending process will be apt

to do some injury to the sketch. Wiping the color along the outlines will leave them hard; it is better to stipple it away with an empty brush, and if the thinnest tint is left it will help to soften the contour. Renew any portion of the outline that may have been obliterated, and you are ready for the local tinting of the flesh.

For this mix one third flesh red No. 2 with two thirds ivory yellow, and lay on the tint with a soft, short brush,

keeping rather within the outlines and allowing the blending brush to carry out the tint afterward. While this is drying a high finish may be given the background by hatching the stronger shades with a medium-sized brush lightly charged with rather stiff color. If your experience will not enable you to do this without working up the tinting, rest satisfied with the clouded effect first produced. Many use a spirit lamp or an oven to hasten the drying. This must be done with care, and the work must not be resumed until the china is perfectly cold.

The deepest shadows of the flesh may be touched with violet of iron, and a general shadow tint made of equal parts flesh red No. 2; light sky blue and ivory black may be lightly stippled on. For the half-tints use the same as prepared for the background. Next touch the lips, cheeks, and ears with flesh red No. 1. Paint blue eyes with light sky blue and brown eyes with sepia. Shade either with black.

Fair hair is laid in, with ivory yellow. The warm shades require sepia and the half-tints the usual mixture of light sky blue and black. For dark hair use the browns, then shade with black and lay light sky blue on the half-tints. Mass the hair in lightly with a good-sized brush, sparing high lights, and do not blend it.

Practice will soon enable you to take heads that are large enough to have more character. With the same colors you can work for higher finish and give more attention to texture and gradation of shade. What is merely suggested in the little faces must be carried out in perfection when you come to the larger ones. The cool half-tones and all the shade will require either stippling or hatching. Gray tones should be brought in effectively between the hair and the brow, or wherever the hair may fall. Work the cool shadows around the eyes carefully, and touch the lachrymals in the inner corners with No. 1 flesh red. See that all retiring surfaces are cool and delicate in tone. If the high lights on the eyes are sharp they may have the slightest touches of permanent white—a single touch to each. Let the lashes consist of soft shade rather than lining. The eyebrows must be even softer, and much broken with light.

Be careful to keep the color of the lips delicate, without being marked by actual outlines; the lower one must have more or less soft light, and the upper one will show little but shadow tint.

It is necessary to keep strictly to the general principles of portraiture, and to adapt them to the exacting conditions the use of mineral colors impose.

Lay on broadly the heavy shadows of the drapery and let the local color follow. All lights must, of course, be spared or wiped out before the color is dry. The lustre of silks will allow of the most beautiful iridescent tones.

For the general shade on white drapery use the ordinary mixture of black and sky blue.

The highest lights on drapery, and also those on jewels, may be sharply touched with permanent white—for a second firing, not for the first.

In painting white lace, after laying in all the shades carefully, pass the thinnest ivory yellow over the subdued lights. High lights, especially where designs show plainly, must be skilfully wrought in with permanent white.

For black lace lay in the cool lights with black and sky blue and trace the shaded portions with rather dry ivory black. Very decided shades may be retouched with black green.

Heavy drapery is not very likely to be used upon figures that are suitable for painting on china.

Those who have followed out these lessons practically will have become very familiar with the use of mineral colors, and if they have acquired, from study and practice in other departments of art, the proficiency that can adapt itself to any kind of work, they will find that painting heads and figures on china is not a difficult undertaking.

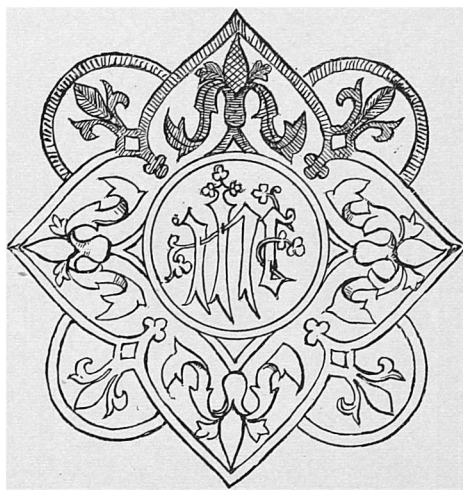
H. C. GASKIN.

AN altar-cloth embroidered with gold may be used in a dry, well-aired church for years without any material change in its freshness; but let it be removed to a damp building, and, probably, the gold will in a very short time become absolutely black. Gas, too, is a great enemy to gold bullion, and all needlework enriched by the precious metal should be kept, as much as possible, away from the hurtful influence of the effluvia. Vapors of every description are prejudicial to manufactured gold. The very use of perfume about the person, or upon the handkerchief of the gold embroideress, will seriously injure the brightness of her work—in fact, may cause it to change visibly before it

leaves her hands. According to Anastasia Dolby, there are persons who "can scarcely touch, or even approach gold without tarnishing it, owing to some obnoxious exhalation from the skin." She justly remarks that: "Such persons, however great their ability or taste for embroidery, should, upon conscientious principles alone, never apply themselves to *gold work*, professionally or otherwise."

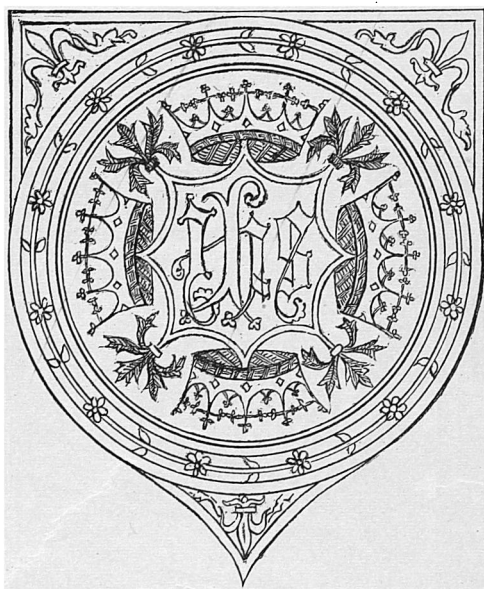
TO TRANSFER OLD EMBROIDERY ON LINEN.

"IN our long experience," writes an expert on church embroidery, "we have found it as well to deviate from,



CENTRE FOR CROSS ON A CHASUBLE, WITH PLAIN ORPHREYS.

if not improve upon, some of the mere mechanical contrivances adopted by the early church workers. One of these is with reference to transferring. We consider it a much better plan to edge the embroidered figure, with its marked outline of silk or gold, *before* it is transferred. Our objection to the old plan of edging *after* the transfer arose through the trouble experienced in fixing the figures on a velvet ground, the resisting pile of which is always unfavorable to the application of other materials, and a raw edge of linen a most unmanageable thing to cover evenly on such a surface. We grant that nearly all the old specimens of needle-



HOOD FOR A CHASUBLE (15 INCHES WIDE, 18 INCHES DEEP).

work, which in effect we are too glad to emulate, have been executed under these disadvantages, but maintain at the same time that we best show our appreciation of such examples by studying to arrive at the same result by easier means. We therefore decidedly recommend that all embroidered figures should have their *marked outlines* made sure before transferring, that is to say, they are to have their orange, or crimson, or gold edges worked round them before they are removed from the frame. They are then to be pasted at the back, and a piece of thin paper, such as *curling* paper, placed on the wet paste, and made to adhere to the

work everywhere. (The object of this *backing* of paper is to secure all the ends of silk, etc., and to make the edges firm when the figure is cut out.) When thoroughly dry the linen should be taken from the frame, and the figures cut cleanly round to within the sixteenth of an inch of the outline. Upon the velvet or other ground, *when framed* to receive the work, the design should be *pounced*, not drawn; the dotted lower lines will be sufficient to guide the laying down of the figures, and may be readily brushed away when no longer needed. The figures being laid in their right position should then be held down at close intervals by *short white* pins passed perpendicularly, like nails, through the figure and the velvet, until secured all round the edges by stitches of waxed purple silk an eighth of an inch apart."

DESIGN FOR A BORDER OF BRYONY.

THIS border (see plate 616) is intended for appliqué. To look really well and repay the worker the ground should be of a delicate, pale shade of green plush, velvet, or some other suitable material, and the leaves of satin, a shade darker than the ground, sewn down with thick gold thread and veined with fine. The flowers should be worked in silk the same color as the leaves, outlined with thick gold thread. The lines down each petal should be in fine thread or yellow silk; they should on no account be omitted, as they are characteristic of the flower. If the dark stalks, stems of the leaves, small buds and tendrils are worked entirely with gold thread they will be exceedingly effective. The main stalk should be in appliqué, with satin of the same shade as that used for the leaves, sewn down and striped with gold thread. Broad lines of gold thread above and below would add much to the beauty of the work. This border will be found very useful for many purposes, such as table-covers, mantel-piece borders, curtains and bedspreads. It would look very well simply worked in outline in one or more colors, but satin appliqué on plush is especially rich and handsome.

Old Books and New.

M. MORGAND AND THE PAILLET LIBRARY.

THE manner in which the sale of the Paillet library was managed offers an instructive example of the mastery which some French dealers have over everything relating to their business. It also shows that, in the domain of art and curiosity, an immense deal of cleverness may be exercised to profitable ends without laying the dealer open to charges of dishonesty and fraud. M. Eugène Paillet, president of "the thrice illustrious and charming 'Société des Amis des Livres,'" as Octave Uzanne calls it, owned about a thousand volumes of the rarest books that a modern bibliophile delights in. It was the cream of all beautiful and good books, and M. Paillet's friends estimated his collection at half a million of francs, and called him happy. There were manuscripts, incunabula and books of the sixteenth century; Elzevirs and old Dutch editions; illustrated books of the eighteenth century; first editions of the Romantics, and everything that heart could desire. So, at least, thought the "Amis des Livres." But their president became seized with a desire to read in the book of nature—in other words, to own a little property in the country. To raise the money he determined to sell his library, but he determined to sell dear—much dearer than he had bought. Spite of the reputation which the collection enjoyed that might not have proved an easy matter if he had simply packed it up and sent it to the Hôtel Drouot; for eighteenth-century books formed the bulk of it, and eighteenth-century books were going down in price. He therefore consulted with M. Morgand, the great bookseller, and king of the old book trade, who also had quantities of eighteenth-century books which he wished to dispose of at a profit on a falling market. It may seem strange that he should see his way to that end by doubling his stock of the commodity, but he did. He paid, or agreed to pay M. Paillet a satisfactory price, and then he set to work to make the most of his bargain in a manner that would do credit to Jay Gould, if that great genius was dealing in books instead of in stocks.

The transaction was kept secret. M. Henri Beraldi, a member of M. Paillet's society, and a very witty writer, was employed to make a catalogue of the collection, and was encouraged to make it, in effect, a book of the most